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2 Koreans Tell of Abduction and Film Making

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BALTIMORE, May 14 — A South Korean film director and his actress wife, who both disappeared into North Korea under mysterious circumstances eight years ago, emerged here today and said they had been kidnapped on the direct orders of the son of President Kim Il Sung of North Korea.

Shin San Ok, the director, and his wife, Choi Un Hui, met with two reporters here and told a story that they found more bizarre than any screenplay.

They said Kim Il Sung's son, Kim Jong Il, who is widely regarded as the most important Communist Party official in North Korea today and the likely successor to his father, was a movie buff, with a personal collection of 20,000 films. The elder Mr. Kim is both head of the Government and the party.

"Kim Jong Il told us later he had ordered our kidnapping," Mr. Shin said. The four-and-a-half hour interview was conducted through an interpreter, with Mr. Shin occasionally using English.

Mr. Shin said the younger Mr. Kim told them he wanted to upgrade his country's film industry and had ordered North Korean agents to kidnap them separately, six months apart, in Hong Kong, and transport them to Pyongyang, where he sought their assistance. Miss Choi, 54 years old, who was seized first, said she refused to help and was kept under house arrest. Mr. Shin, 59, who was kidnapped later, said he was told his wife was dead and refused to cooperate also.

Twice, he said, he tried to escape, but after his second effort he was imprisoned for four years in Prison No. 6, outside of Pyongyang, along with 2,000 other political prisoners. Finally, he said, in March 1983, after being reunited with Miss Choi for the first time, they agreed to cooperate in Kim Jong Il's plans while all the time looking for ways to make their escape together.

After that, they were taken to Belgrade, Yugoslavia, in April 1984, with instructions to declare that they had gone to North Korea voluntarily. They complied and repeated this on subsequent occasions. South Korean authorities maintained that they had been kidnapped.

The two said they had won Kim Il Jong's confidence after being awarded several movie prizes in eastern Europe for their productions in North Korea.

Traveled to Eastern Europe

Then they were allowed to travel to eastern Europe together. Two months ago, while on a trip to Budapest to discuss a joint North Korean-Hungarian movie on Genghis Khan, they stopped in Vienna, with permission, to probe the possibilities of exporting North Korean films to the West.

While in the Austrian capital they hatched their plan to stay in the West. With the help of a Japanese journalist Mr. Shin had known in the past, they shook off a North Korean agent in a taxi chase through the city and sought asylum in the United States Embassy. They also paid Kim Il Jong back for his kidnapping, they said, by tricking him into depositing in the Bank of America branch in Vienna $2.3 million that is still in Mr. Shin's name.

Mr. Shin said he regarded the money as "an insurance policy," but he has not yet decided what to do about it. In its only comment on their escape to the United States, North Korea has accused them not of seeking freedom but of trying to abscond with funds.

For the last month, they have been debriefed in "safe houses" by Central Intelligence Agency and State Department officials. A State Department official said they had convinced American authorities that their story was credible and would probably be given permission to live in the United States.

Express Concern for Safety

Throughout the interview with this reporter and Don Oberdorfer of The Washington Post, the first they have given since they sought asylum March 13, both expressed concern for their safety. They said they had been told by North Korean authorities that if they ever escaped, they would be assassinated. American security guards stood outside the room in the hotel.

"I do believe there is a possibiity that they will try to kill us," Mr. Shin said.

They have been regarded as "a find" by American intelligence because of the intimate details they have been able to provide about the inner ruling circle of North Korea, which next to Albania is the Communist country about which least is known. In particular, they were able to tell officials about Kim Jong Il, who is 47 years old and who has been variously described as close to death or in complete charge.

Described as Very Intelligent

They described him as a very intelligent, ruthless official, who made every decision, even the most seemingly insignificant.

"He is a micro-manager," Mr. Shin said. He said the funds for his filmmaking company in North Korea were handled directly by the younger Mr. Kim, who had a large projection room in his house and who seemed to have a deep interest in films. It has never been reported before that Kim Jong Il was so intrigued by movies.

While they are largely unknown in the West, Mr. Shin and Miss Choi had celebrity status in South Korea and achieved the same status in the North.

But in 1977, when this story begins, Mr. Shin had lost his license to direct films in South Korea because, he said today, of a dispute with the Korean Central Intelligence Agency, which "falsely" told President Park Chung Hee that he was conspiring with younger directors against the Government. Miss Choi, who briefly was divorced from Mr. Shin at that time, was running an acting school in Seoul when she was told that a Chinese businessman in Hong Kong wanted to finance a film for her.

On Jan. 14, 1978, while in Hong Kong, she said, she was told by someone who had worked for her husband that the businessman was out of town, but that she should wait. A Korean woman, who later turned out to be a North Korean agent, took her on a tour.

While at Repulse Bay, a part of Hong Kong, a group of men who seemed to know who Miss Choi was suggested a "short" boat ride, and after first resisting, Miss Choi agreed. "I didn't know my way around and did not know how to get back to my hotel by myself."

"I realized the boat was going straight to sea," Miss Choi said, stifling tears with a tissue. "I felt uneasy. I thought this must be a robbery. I was thinking about the money in my handbag. I asked the woman what this was about, and she just kept quiet and began smoking cigarettes."

Awoke Being Carried to Ship

One of the men, she said, who looked like a leader, said to her, "We are heading for Kim Il Sung's embrace."

"I didn't quite understand what he said," she said. "He repeated it. I felt ill, I felt like the blood was being drained. I fainted."

When she awoke, she said, she was being carried aboard a cargo ship at sea, where she was taken to the captain's cabin for the trip to Nampo, the port near Pyongyang. When the ship berthed, she was met by Kim Jong Il. She said she was given the use of a former house of Kim Jong Il and was asked repeatedly to work for North Korea, which she said she refused to do.

Mr. Shin said that when his wife did not return to South Korea as scheduled, he called up the man who had served as his wife's host. "He told me that he could not speak over the phone and asked me to come to Hong Kong."

He said he flew to Hong Kong and was told by the intermediary that his wife had "disappeared." But nothing more.

He returned to Hong Kong in July 1978. On his way to dinner at the Repulse Bay Hotel with a Korean, who later turned out to be a North Korean agent, he said, his car was stopped by a number of men, one of whom was armed with a knife. They put a sack over his head, and doused him with chloroform or something similar, he said.

He also was transferred by boat to a cargo ship and taken to North Korea. When he asked for information about

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